

Floyd Norman, Disney Legend



I was lucky enough to realize my dream. When I was a little kid in Santa Barbara, sitting on the floor in my grandmother's house, dreaming of maybe one day working for Walt Disney, and to have that dream come true, I think that's pretty remarkable.

Everyone has dreams when they are little. Floyd Norman's dream was to work for the Disney Company. Even before he could read, he recognized the Disney logo. Through education, hard work, and talent, Floyd Norman made his dream come true.

Floyd Norman was born on June 22, 1935 in Santa Barbara, California. After graduating high school, he attended the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena to learn more about illustration. Then, in his third year of college, Walt Disney Productions offered him a job as an animator for the movie, *Sleeping Beauty*. This was Norman's dream job, so he accepted the position, becoming the first African American animator for Walt Disney Productions.

Floyd Norman worked for Disney from 1956-1958. Then he was drafted into the military and served during the Korean Conflict. After serving in the military, Norman returned to Disney. He worked on many movies, such as *Sword In The Stone* and *The Jungle Book*.

After Walt Disney died, Floyd left Walt Disney Productions to start his own company called Vignette Films. This company produced several films about Black History for high school and college students. The company also produced the animated pilot for the cartoon,

Hey! Hey! Hey! It's Fat Albert and animation for *Sesame Street*.

During the 1970s, Floyd Norman worked for both Hanna-Barbera and Walt Disney Productions. During his time at Hanna-Barbera, Norman animated and wrote *Scooby Doo* and *Josie And The Pussycats*. Then, Norman returned to Walt Disney Productions and worked on the film, *Robin Hood*.

While at Disney Publications, Norman illustrated many Disney books. He also produced *Mickey Strip* which was a comic strip that was published six days a week. He produced this comic strip for six years.

In the 1990s, Floyd Norman returned to working on animated films for both Pixar and Walt Disney Productions. He worked on *Toy Story 2*, *Monsters Inc.*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Mulan*.

In 1999, Norman started Afrokids.com with his longtime friend, Leo Sullivan. This company provides positive multimedia for Black families.

In 2007, Floyd Norman was inducted as a Disney Legend for his contributions to Walt Disney. He continues to work today on freelance projects.

Floyd Norman, Disney Legend



I was lucky enough to realize my dream. When I was a little kid in Santa Barbara, sitting on the floor in my grandmother's house, dreaming of maybe one day working for Walt Disney, and to have that dream come true, I think that's pretty remarkable.

1. Floyd Norman did not finish college because he was offered a job at Disney. Do you think he made the right decision? Explain your answer.

2. Reread the quote in the black box. What conclusion can you draw from it?

3. Give an example from the text that supports the statement that Floyd Norman is a hard worker.

4. What can you infer about Norman's thoughts about diversity in film and media?
